



Issue #20
\$10

**LADIES OF
MID-AMERICA**
*Vicki Sheridan &
Chriss Crossen*

Expanded
**MIRROR-
MIRROR**

THE PROBLEM
CHAPTER 2

**LIKE FATHER,
LIKE SON**

**GROWING UP
TRANSGENDERED**



**Vicki
Sheridan**

Roberts' Ramblings

“Potpourri...”

Before you get a knot in your pantyhose, I realize this was **supposed** to be a Photo Annual. Well, it isn't. Not because there weren't enough photos but because there weren't enough letters and miscellaneous material to put one together. In other words, youse ain't writin' like youse usta. So, this issue is a “regular” issue, although I view each issue as special in and of itself. I hope you do too. When enough material has been collected, we'll produce a Photo Album issue.

A lot of people really liked the article on Upper Body Workout by Delia VanMaris. We're planning more articles along the lines of body sculpting through exercise. For that matter, this is really a magazine for YOU, so drop me a line and tell me what you'd like to see.

I'm curious to know how you felt about issue #18 with it's emphasis on female impersonators — but don't worry, this magazine is dedicated to the “typical” (whatever that means) crossdresser, just like you and me. I won't ever abandon that niche.

I hope you've noticed the regularity of the recent issues. I've been assured of a quarterly production schedule by our distributor, STAR, in New York. That means I'll be able to schedule our production more accurately and perhaps begin to include some event information. Also, STAR has promised me more control over the selection of their ads, so there won't be those moments of embarrassment as your partner or friends flip through the magazine like there has been in the past. I have to say here that the new owners at STAR have been extremely cooperative and they feel that *LadyLike* is one of the best publications they handle. I think so too, but I'm prejudiced.

A Peek Into The Future...

There are many great things happening in the Transgender Community. The Congress of Transgender Organizations (CTO) has really caught on and seems to be blossoming. By the time you read this, the Chair will have passed from the capable hands of Alison Laing to the capable hands of Anne Johnson (IXE). I believe the CTO will have a major role in the future development of the community.

AEGIS, the American Educational Gender Information Service, in Atlanta has received its tax-exemption from the IRS. Look for AEGIS to begin fund raising for its many projects. The best part of AEGIS is Dallas Denny. She's smart, capable, and can actually write both great narrative and a wicked research paper. She's just had her first book *Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research* published by Garland Publishing. The next best part of AEGIS is that it is 100% volunteer labor. Every cent that comes in goes into a program or a project and not into someone's purse. Consider making a tax deductible donation.

Fantasia Fair is making a strong comeback this year. The Fair had fallen on hard times for a lot of different reasons, but with a new management team co-led by Ari Kane and Alison Laing, the Fair is alive, well, and looking better than ever. The most significant accomplishment of the new team is a lowering of the cost of attending the full fair. The eight day/seven night package is quite reasonable at \$775 (double occupancy). There's even a \$50 discount if you register early. For more info, call 617•277•3454.

And finally, Renaissance has signed an agreement to raise funds for a transgender film project by an independent producer. They've set up a Community Film Fund to accept tax-deductible donations. Call 610•630•1437 for more information, but send a donation.

JoAnn Roberts “”

LadyLike #20

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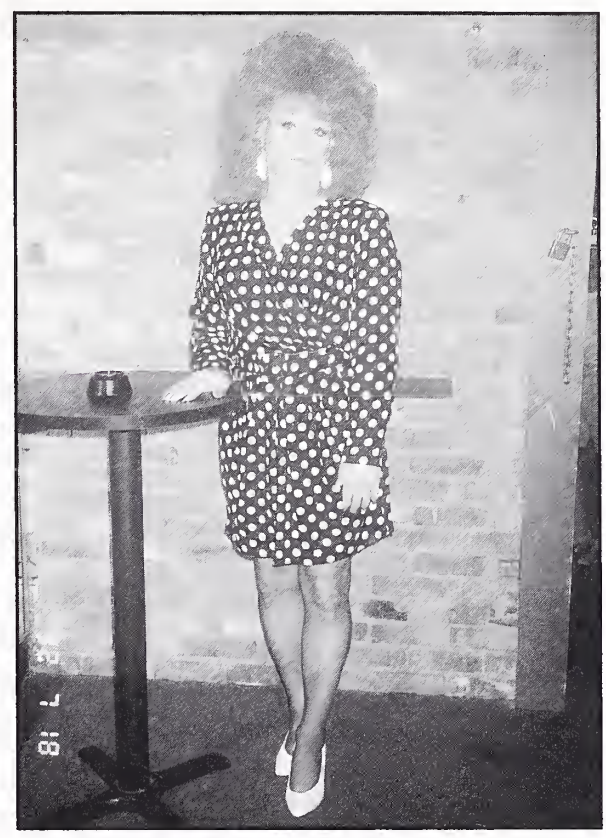
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Cover Credits: Vicki Sheridan



Vicki Sheridan



Chriss Crossen

Vicki Sheridan



LadyLike's

Profile

NAME: Vicki Sheridan

AGE: 47

PROFESSION: Electronics

RESIDENCE: Kansas City, Mo

HEIGHT: 5' 7"

WEIGHT: 165#

MEASUREMENTS: 40-28-38, Size 16

SHOE SIZE: 10

FAVORITE THINGS

SHOE STYLE: High-heel pumps

PERFUME: Beautiful

MOVIE: Gone With The Wind

MUSIC: Country

STYLES: Professional woman, daywear

PLACE: Hawaii

TURN-ONS: Wind blowing my hair, just being a woman.

TURN-OFFS: Self-centered people.



Vicki Sheridan

LadyLike: You were actually allowed to crossdress when you were little. That's incredibly wonderful! Share those circumstances with us.

Vicki Sheridan: I began crossdressing when I was three or four years old, during family dinners, usually at my aunt's or grandmother's house. On these occasions I would dress-up in old clothes that were kept for the children to play with. The clothes were my grandmother's and aunt's old dresses, night gowns, shoes and make up. My cousins, all of whom were girls, liked to play dress-up with me. This was especially fun as they liked to dress me up like a girl in dresses, heels and make up. I really enjoyed these family dinners very much.

During summers, I would stay with grandmother for a week or two. My grandparents were farmers and lived in the country off a back road. After the men would go to work, I would dress-up and pretend I was a girl. I really liked the summers at grand-

mothers house. Before the men would return home, I had to take the make-up off and change back into my boy clothes. Many times my grandmother would ask me if I would have liked to be born a girl? My answer was always, Yes! Dressing up made me feel good; this was the way I would dress all the time.

LL: Eventually, though, you were told to stop. How did that make you feel?

VS: My parents would allow me to stay home alone when I was ten years old. This gave me a chance to dress in my mother's clothes. I almost got caught a couple of times when they came home early, but I would hurry into the bathroom, lock the door and change. This gave me time to get my mom's clothes and the make up off. My mother must have known that I was dressing-up in her clothes because I would never return the clothes or the make up the way she arranged them in her



When I was 16 I got a car. That gave me more chances to dress and get out in public. I kept my clothes and make up in a wooden box which was always locked in my trunk. When I got enough time, I would drive to a deserted part of a park, change clothes, apply my make up and drive around. This was a great feeling for me. But once some boys drove up behind me, stopped and started to get out. I was scared of being caught so, I quickly drove off. The boys followed me but when I got to the freeway I was able to lose them. After this incident I found a large parking lot where I could park well away from other cars and change into my female clothes. This worked out well for awhile.

LL: The big change came when you got your first apartment. What happened then?

VS: After graduation from high school I found a job which required me to travel out of town. Being out of town meant I could go shopping for clothes or purchase make up items for "Vicki" without much thought about who I might run into.

About the same time, I rented an apartment for myself which allowed me to dress up whenever I wanted and go out in public. Generally, I would

drawer. No matter how hard I tried to put things back the way they were, it was never as mother would stack her things. The funny thing was, she never said anything to me.

My sister is four years younger than I am. When she was old enough, we would play dress-up together. We played this way until I was 14. Unfortunately, at this time, my mother and grandmother decided I was getting too old to dress up in girl's clothes. This hurt me very much as I truly enjoyed my dress-up times. I asked my mother why I had to stop dressing as I was not hurting anyone. Mother explained that others would make fun of me and they were afraid of what the neighbors would think if I were allowed to go around dressing like a girl. After our talk it became very difficult for me to dress. I had to hide all of my girl things.

LL: But you didn't stop. So, how did you keep up the activity?

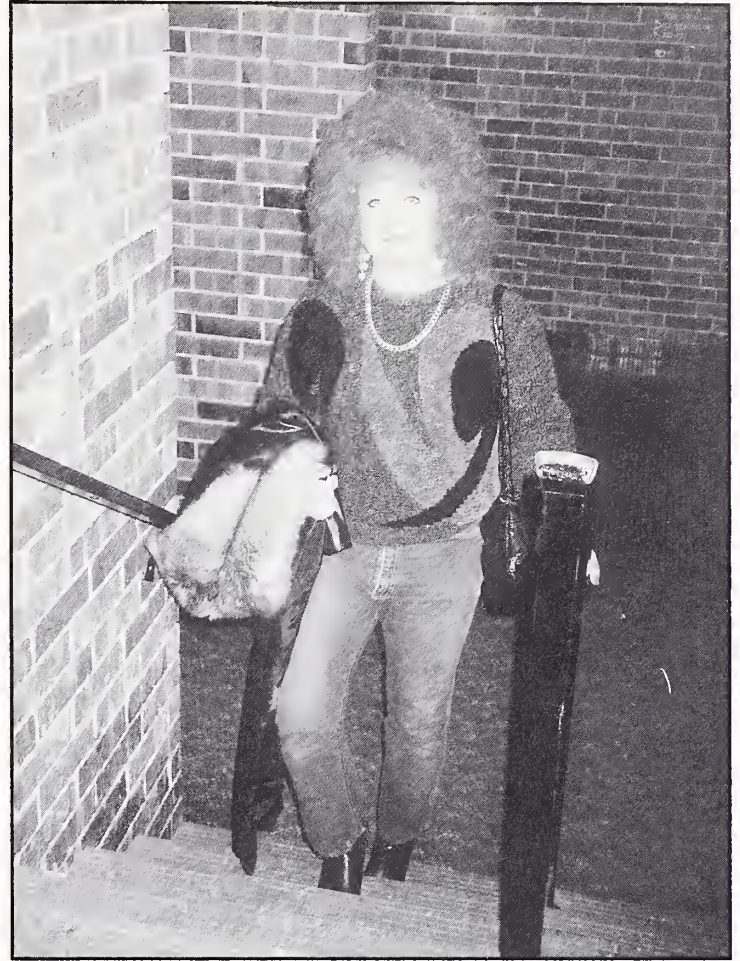
VS: The only time I was able to dress was when no one was at home. Dressing up alone was not as much fun as when I enjoyed dressing up with my cousins and sister.



only venture out at night so the other tenants would not be able to tell that I was really a boy. One morning a neighbor asked me who the girl was in my apartment the night before. I told him it was a friend from out of town. He seemed to accept my explanation. Afterwards I was much more careful when I dressed, especially if I detected activity or lights in any of the nearby apartments.

I was married one year after graduating from high school. The woman I married had no idea of my crossdressing. In fact I only dressed when she was at work or when she would visit her parents. This was okay until about a year after we were married. She found some of my "special" clothes that were hidden in the bathroom. She did not know what to think except maybe I had another women.

At this time, I had no other choice but to explain my crossdressing needs and desires to her. She did not know what to think and did not understand why I had to crossdress. We had many talks about my activity which eased some of her concerns. I got her a book by Virginia Prince to further explain what crossdressing was all about. Once again this helped to explain the crossdressing and to let her know that I was not the only one that had these tendencies.



LL: So she seemed to accept your crossdressing?

VS: After a month or so, I talked her into going out with me when I was dressed. The first few times we went out together we simply drove around as two girls. Then we progressed to going to the drive-in movie. After that, we tried an indoor movie theatre. Later we got bolder and went to a shopping mall together. We even went to a restaurant and for walks in the park together when I was crossdressed.

LL: Eventually, though, you found the organized aspects of our community. How?

VS: After our daughter was born it was very difficult, once again, to find the right time to dress and for my wife and I to go out together. A year later our son was born. My wife, at this time, decided she no longer wanted to go out with me when I was crossdressed. This put me back to going out by myself. Dressing by myself was no fun, so I began going to the Jewel Box Lounge in Kansas City. This bar was a famous hang-out for those who enjoyed female impersonator revues. I had fun during these times in the Jewel Box as I would mingle and talk with some of the other "girls." When any of the male patrons





some friends who also enjoyed crossdressing and would accept me as a woman. Finally, the president of the group invited me to an actual meeting. This was very exciting for me as the meeting was to be held at a hotel in Overland Park, Kansas.

For the first meeting I did not crossdress. Basically, I was afraid of what kind of people might be at this sort of meeting. I was very concerned when I arrived at the hotel a bit early to find only two other people in the meeting room. The good thing was that both of them were friendly and made me feel at ease.

As other people arrived I began talking with some of them and became much more comfortable with the situation. At first, I felt out of place, especially since I was not "dressed." For the next meeting, I was dressed to the hilt. However, I still felt uneasy being dressed as a woman and walking into a room full of people I had only met once. Most of the girls were quite friendly. So, as the evenings went on I gained more confidence and felt better about being a girl at this crossdresser's meeting. Two of the girls came over to me when the meeting was over and told me they hoped I had enjoyed myself and suggested I would be welcomed if I wanted to come back.

I have been returning to the CAF meetings ever

would come over to speak with me I would just tell them I was married and liked girls. This generally would send them elsewhere in the bar.

In 1989, I answered a classified ad in *Female Impersonator Magazine*. A "girl" wrote me a letter with information about a support group for crossdressers in the Kansas City area.

I wrote a letter of introduction back to her in hopes of possibly meeting some others who also liked crossdressing as much as I did. Well, after a couple of months I was surprised to receive a response from the president of the group. She told me a bit about the support group and suggested we meet for a "personal interview." After we set up a time and place I wrote her another letter to confirm our meeting. I was so excited about the meeting that I actually counted the days and hours until the time of that meeting.

The closer it came to the meeting day the more apprehensive I became about what I was going to get involved with. We met at a restaurant. Neither one of us was dressed. Our conversation focused on what I was looking for from the crossdresser's support group. I explained that I would like to have



since and have developed several good friendships as a result of my association with other members.

Over the years I have attended several conventions in Kansas City; Iowa City, Iowa; St Louis, MO; and San Antonio, Texas. In addition, I have also attended meetings at G.I.C. in Denver, CO and R.C.G.A. in Omaha, NE. This has allowed me to meet other people from all over the world. None of this would have been possible had I not taken the first step in reaching out to others and joining a local support group.

LL: How is your relationship with your wife now? Has she accepted your activities with CAF?

VS: My wife still would rather I did not dress and go out in public. Although she has accepted the fact that I am not able to stop my desire to dress, she realizes that the need will always be a part of me. My wife loves me and is supportive to the point that she will help me get my things together when I get dressed at home to go out. My hair is long enough so I do not need a wig. On occasion, she will even set and style my hair before I go out. At times she will even buy Vicki clothes and other necessities. My wife is a wonderful person. I am very lucky to have her as



my friend. She is the one who persuaded me to seek an office in CAF. We were talking about the group needing leadership and people to work for it. No one seemed interested in taking the time to do what needed to be done to maintain the continuity of the group, so she suggested that I become more involved with the group and there I was!

LL: Do your children know you dress?

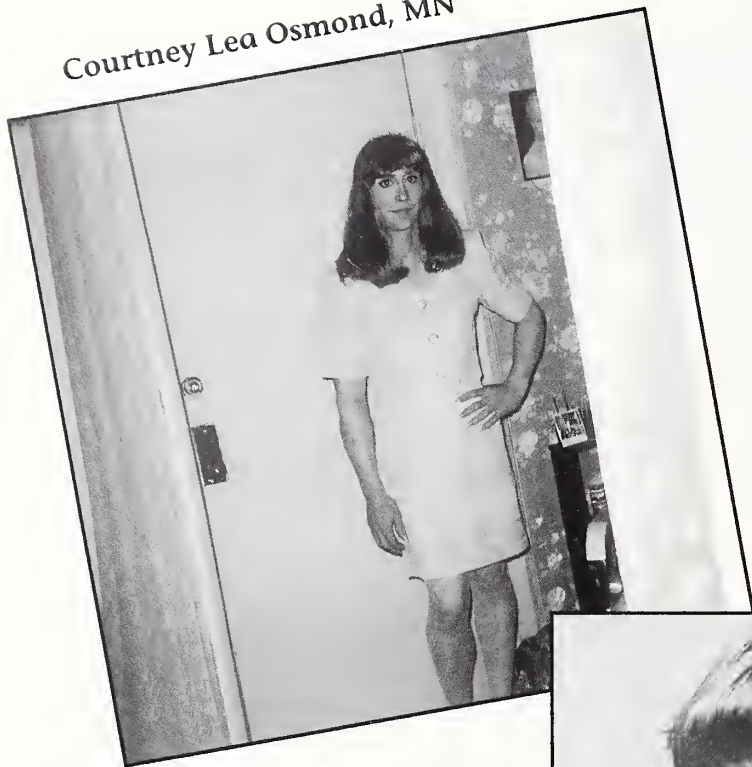
VS: Neither my children, nor any of my family, to the best of my knowledge, knows of my crossdressing. As far as I know, my mother thinks I stopped crossdressing after I left home. My children are out of college and on their own. They have never seen me as Vicki and it has never been discussed around them. At this point, I don't feel it's necessary to burden any part of my family with this secret.

As for others, I tell people about my dressing on a need-to-know basis.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share my experiences with the readers of *LadyLike*.

MIRYOR-YORYM

Courtney Lea Osmond, MN



Joanne Wilson, Australia



Miki Clarke, New Zealand ►



Anita Amber, CA



Barbara Ann Roberts, IL





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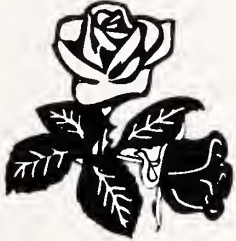
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Girl Talk



that is the reality. You are quite fortunate to have discovered the resources you have at your age. I was almost 35 years old before I found the community that is now so much a part of my life. Once you are out of school and on your own, you will have many opportunities to express your feminine side. The key here is to move out of your parents home as soon as possible. With a job comes money and that means you can buy clothing and also travel to some of the events around the country.

As for coming out while in school, I would not recommend it to a high-school student. But at college, there is some possibility of doing so. It is not a fait-accompli that you will be humiliated if people find out about your crossdressing. More and more younger people ARE coming out, and more and more family and friends accept them.

If you are looking for support, see if your college has a gay/lesbian student group and go talk to them. Their experiences in "coming out" are identical for transgendered people, although it's not an issue of sexual orientation with us but gender identification.

Readers, what have you to add?

Girl Talk is your forum. Any question on any topic is fair game, from makeup secrets to the psychology of transgendered behavior. If I don't have an answer, I'll find someone who does. Write me care of the magazine with your questions.

Dear JoAnn

I can not come out of the closet since I am a 22 year old college student who still lives at home when not in the dorm at school. What can high-school and college students do since they are financially dependent on others and must obtain an education. We cannot come out of the closet since we will be humiliated. What is your advice? Perhaps some of your readers may be able to help. Please print my address.

Dee Kay, PO Box 1114, Olney, MD 20830

Dear Dee,

You really don't have a lot of choice but to be patient. That may not be what you want to hear, but





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Like Father, Like Son.

a true story... Joanne Wilson/Australia

I am certain that I am not alone in the world but, so far, I know of no others who are second generation crossdressers. So for this reason alone, I have supposed people might be interested to hear my story. I was born in the middle nineteen thirties and for some odd-ball reason I have little or no memories of my life until I was nine years old or thereabouts. It may be that earlier passages are selectively blocked but a number of visits over the years to psychotherapists have been unable to tap into this early period. It's not really important to me; it is just a puzzle I would like, one day, to complete.

What I can remember is that my father was a difficult man; always evil tempered, he was also an occasional drunk and when so he was violently abusive and occasionally physically violent. His temper was such that he roared when he was aroused (by the most seemingly insignificant things) and he woke me from my sleep a few times and, of course, I woke in fear. When this became a fairly regular occurrence, I began to seek solace and I chose to do so with items of my mother's soft, silky underwear, collecting one or other of these garments and taking them back to my bed with me as a security blanket. I enjoyed their intimacy and, with them, for company (my surrogate mother, undeniably). I waited out the fury in the living room below me and finally was able to drift back to sleep. This habit went on throughout my ninth and tenth years and took a change of direction in the latter part of my tenth year when I began to wear the items I borrowed. This meant, at first, that I would put on a pair of panties under my pajamas at first, but later I wore nighties and slips, either as well or instead. I was old enough not to have my parents check on me through the night and I replaced these items in their correct drawers first thing in the mornings.

With no knowledge of the reasons for his torment, I hated my father for his behavior and began to identify with my mother, wanting to grow up like

her, rather than like him. Even in his best times there was little or no communication between my father and me.

As I approached my twelfth birthday my parents, at my father's insistence, began to go out from time to time to his club for social functions. Seemingly they had decided I was old enough to look after myself. On the first occasion they did this, they had not been gone more than half an hour before I slid out of bed and went to their room and helped myself to a full outfit — panties, chemise top and slip — of my mother's underwear and dressed in it. Standing in front of their long mirror I was entranced by what I saw and from that moment I began to believe that I wanted to be a girl. For some months, every time my parents went out, I would dress in some items of my mother's and I slowly built on the underwear. My mother was a small woman and most of her clothes were becoming a reasonable fit. I graduated to dresses and nylons and high heels and, finally, to lipstick and rouge. I loved dressing up like this and every time I heard that my parents were going out for the night I rejoiced in the opportunities presented.

About this time I made an extraordinary discovery. On one occasion when I was seeking something to wear from my mother's wardrobe I noticed a number of dresses which were longer than the others. When I checked, I found they were three sizes larger than my mother's. Puzzled, I found pairs of high heels two sizes larger and, finally, a cache of underclothing separated from my mother's and, yes, much larger. When I made this discovery I was standing there dressed in a bra, panties, girdle, nylons and slip of my mother's. In the circumstances, it didn't take much figuring to put two and two together and get four. I was thrilled to think that my father wore dresses too because it meant that I was not alone in this strange habit.

Since I was always in bed by seven each night and that I visited my grandmother for a weekend every month I figured that my father must have worn his ladies clothes after I had gone to bed and on weekends when I was away. It was easy enough to find out. For a few nights after I had made my discovery I willed myself to remain awake for long after I had gone to bed. For the first two nights nothing untoward took place — that is, my father did not visit the bedroom once he thought I might be asleep. On one of these nights he raged around the house as usual. On the third night, as I lay awake waiting, there were footsteps on the stairs and a shadow passed by my bedroom door and went to my parents bedroom. I listened but I could hear nothing that might have revealed to me what he was doing. At one point he passed by again on the way to the bathroom but since I could not see the hallway from my bed, I had no idea what he was wearing - although by now I knew it was my father because I had heard him cough briefly. He spent about half an hour in the bathroom before returning to the bedroom and spending another ten minutes there. Eventually he left the bedroom. I heard him pause to switch off the light. As soon as I heard him proceeding along the hall I knew from his gait that he was walking differently and I guessed he was wearing high heels. He descended the stairs with much more care than he normally did which, for me, confirmed my suspicions. I continued to lie awake for some time and suddenly became aware of something else. There were no arguments going on down below.

Although staying awake every night was an impossibility I managed to do so often enough over the next few weeks to establish a few things. My father dressed as a woman at least twice a week, after I had gone to bed and after they thought I would be asleep. On the nights that he did so there were never any arguments or rages from the living room. By a bit of detective work I was also able to establish that he dressed up when I was away for my weekends at Grandma's. This was easy enough to prove. I simply checked, before I went off for the weekend, on the location and position of all his clothes. When they were replaced in different positions in the wardrobe or in drawers it was simple enough to deduct that he had been wearing them.

For a year or so this pattern continued. On those

occasions when my parents went out somewhere, I raided my mother's wardrobe for my own nights of dress-ups.

Then there was another turn of events which enthralled me. One Saturday afternoon, when I had been engaged in a school activity, I came home about five to find only my mother at home. And she was dressed to go out. She explained that Dad had gone on ahead somewhere and that she had prepared my meal for me and was off to join him. I accepted this information and ate quickly and raced off to their bedroom to choose some female clothes for myself. In the process I noticed that one of my father's dresses was missing. Checking around I discovered that a pair of high heels and a set of underwear, his breast forms (which were cotton buds sewn into the cut off toes of a pair of nylons) and one of his two wigs were missing. There was only one possible conclusion. He was wearing them. And he was out somewhere.

I decided I had to confirm this for myself and worked out a plan. From the window of my parents room I could see into the driveway where they left the car. I figured that if I sat in the darkened room, in my pajamas, I would be able to see them arrive home and, under the patio lights, see my father and still have time to get back to my own bedroom while they were opening the front door and entering the house. It was very hard to stay awake and I kept checking my watch and taking a brisk walk around the room. At about one a.m. I saw the headlights of the car enter the driveway and a few moments later my mother, who had been driving, and father got out of the car and my suspicions were confirmed. My father was wearing the missing clothes. I had no way of knowing where they might have been or whether this was a one-off excursion but it thrilled me to think he had been out dressed this way.

My school sports activities became a regular Saturday afternoon activity and my father going out somewhere as a woman began to coincide with my absence during the afternoon. As best I could work it out he was dressing during the afternoon and Mother was taking him somewhere and returning to get my meal and greet me before going off again to join him. My sports activities also interfered with my visiting my Grandmother. But it also meant that

Dad and I could both dress up more often. Every weekend, in fact.

In a relatively short time and certainly by the time I was thirteen, Mother gave up coming home to feed me — on the not unreasonable assumption that I could feed myself — and neither of them were there when I arrived home from sport. I assumed since I was getting older and that going to bed at seven at night was becoming a bit unreasonable, my father eased off his dressing in the evenings, concentrating on weekends only. But as a result the week night brawling returned from time to time and I was reminded of the fact that he was a much calmer, more reasonable person when he was dressed. I assumed, although I was never able to confirm it, that my mother encouraged and supported his habit, at least, for that reason.

In the meantime, by the time I was fourteen I was a confirmed crossdresser and fairly skinned at it. I loved presenting as a girl and I was already wishing I could be one always. All through my early teens I dreamed of being a girl and going to a girl's school and to dances and being able, always, to wear pretty clothes and make-up and jewelry.

But I could never tell my parents. I had a strong feeling that my mother would probably accept the knowledge, under the circumstances, but I also thought she might be disappointed in me and I didn't want that. I could not talk to my father about anything at all so I never let on that I knew about him nor about my similar likes.

He continued his weekend activities all through my teens and as I began to go out nights with friends new opportunities opened up for him which I know he took advantage of. There were times around this period when he was dressing as often as three or four times a week. I left home when I was eighteen and had finished school. I did so be-

cause I didn't want to continue to live at home because I wanted my own living space and I wanted my Dad to have his.

Two years later my parents separated. I have always been sure it was because of my father's drinking and propensity for violence which caused my mother to leave, rather than his dressing up which I know she tolerated. I saw my father rarely after that until he died some twelve years later. When I met the girl I wanted to marry I was sorely disappointed that she could not accept my need to dress as my mother had of my father.

Before we were married, I spent my first sessions with a psychotherapist and he suggested that one of the reasons I like to wear female clothes was because my father did it. When I told him I had begun this activity before I knew about my father he dismissed the point and suggested I *had* seen him earlier in my life and blocked it out. He may be right but I have always rejected the theory, preferring to believe that I chose to wear female clothes without any prompting or outside influence. I believe I chose them because I always wanted to be a girl.

In my latter years I have deeply regretted not having been able to discuss this issue with my father. I believe, in different circumstances, it would have been beneficial to both of us but specially to him. To this day I have no idea where he went when he went out but since we are talking about the 1940s it is most probable that Mother had found some accommodating friends. Gay bars and drag queens were not common in those days and neither, to the best of my knowledge were support groups. I guess it is possible, though, that my father found a kindred spirit.

I would be most keen and interested to hear from any others who have had a similar set of experiences. You can write me care of this magazine.

Subscribers to LadyLike can purchase a copy of the current Who's Who & Resource Guide for \$5.00, a 50% discount off the \$10 regular price. Send your check or money order, along with the mailing label from your LadyLike envelope, or give your CDS Customer Number, and we'll get this invaluable guide back to you tout suite. The Who's Who lists over 100 biographies of important people in the community, plus the resource sections are without equal, and it's all cross-indexed for easy reference.

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So, You Thought Being Gay Was Lonely? Growing Up Transgendered in the South.

by Dallas Denny, writing as
The Girl Who Now Has A Name

Despite its prejudices, the Old South always had a toleration for, or even love of, the unusual. Until the 1960's, when the proliferation of strip malls, supermarkets, limited access highways, and other triflings of postmodern Amerikan Korporate Kulture replaced Mom-and-Pop groceries with supermarkets and killed downtowns as viable areas for shopping, most Southern towns had one or more "quare" characters—men and women out of touch with the rest of the society—male and female Delta Dawns who would wander around, doing whatever it was that they did so well. But they, wearing their faded roses of days gone by, were only the outermost stratum of the onion. Peel back a layer, and you would find "queers" of another sort. Labeled and stigmatized as they might be, they were part and parcel of the social fabric—women who lived together in something that was not quite sisterhood, men who could always be visited at midnight by a carload of teenage boys with hard-ons and too much Carling Black Label in their bellies, women who dressed like men and didn't give a damn, and, most curiously of all, men who would dress up as women.

By the time of the British invasion in 1963, such people were already receding into legend, at least in my part of the South. I remember hearing about someone called Martin Smith, who would (horrors!) pass himself off as a woman. The story, oft-repeated but never verified, was that a sergeant from the nearby air base had been very much in love with him and married him, only to have a rude awakening on their wedding night. I never got to meet Martin, more's the pity. He was before my time, and the high schools of the period, which were usually principled by ineffectual bald-headed, fat, white men, invariably had coaches with yellow flat-tops who doubled as assistant principles, enforcing their McCarthy-ist ideas with a surfeit of physical discipline and Cold War scare tactics. Gender variation was not only not allowed—it was unthinkable. Girls

all wore skirts, and boys were sent home for not wearing socks or for wearing (the big thing in my senior year) madras pants. As the Fab Four, with their scandalously long hair, Yeah-Yeah-Yeahed on television for Ed "Really Big Shew" Sullivan, the boys of the South watched on black-and-white sets, their hair cut burr-short on the back and sides.

And there was I, in the midst of all this Southern culture-in-flux, an iron filing in the electromagnetic field of life, with a very strong magnet only yards away, in my mother's room. When she was away, I would go through her lingerie drawer, silently memorizing the position of each guiltily borrowed garment so that I could fit it back in place like a piece from a nylon jigsaw puzzle. I had no idea why I, a boy of the highest ideals and purest character, a boy who had always been strong of heart and unlined of brow, suddenly found myself drawn so powerfully to women's apparel, but I did know that I was possessed of something far stronger than I. A sleeping demon had somehow awakened in me, and it *would* have its way; to resist was madness. I considered very briefly trying to fight it, but I knew in my heart that it would destroy me if I didn't give in, and I did. I must have struggled with myself all of fifteen minutes before making this life-altering decision.

I would slip on panties, tug into a girdle that was already too small, pull on nylons fastening them, in those pre-pantyhose days, to the girdle's dangling rubber thongs, struggle to snap a bra (the mechanics of which I did not understand), cover it all with a slip. And then madness—I slipped on a dress, pulled on a kerchief, and all was lost.

You see, unlike crossdressers, who are fetishistically attracted by the apparel itself, I very quickly discovered that women's clothing was but a means to an end: it was necessary in order to build the disguise of myself-as-woman. I remember well the day the gas gauge of my gender identity leapt for the first time out of the "M" zone and strayed de-

fiantly into the "F." I was perhaps fifteen. The rest of the family had gone on a ride, and I had begged off; the excuse is long forgotten. I was sitting in the floor of the living room, wearing a purple dress (I had my own by that time), experimenting with my face. And for the first time, I got it right. Looking in the mirror, with my mandatory burr-short-on-the-sides haircut, I would ordinarily see a boy, and only a boy. In that dress, with Cover Girl skin and Maybelline eyes, my hair blended into a fall, I saw a very pretty, an almost beautiful girl. I didn't—and this is important—see a boy dressed as a girl. I saw a *girl*. I remember thinking, "This is who I want to be. This is who I probably should have been." But I also remember thinking that it couldn't be. It wasn't possible. I was looking at a fiction, a fabrication, a creature created out of cosmetics and cloth. The girl in the mirror was a fantasy, and I could see no way to make her a reality. She had no name. In the end, she wound up in a paper sack which I hid under a loose board in the summer-hot attic.

There are few secrets in a small house with six people living in it, and the girl-with-no-name was soon discovered. In no uncertain terms, I was let to know how scandalous, how perverse, how ugly she was. Despite my decision to give-in to my urges, I had been having real problems dealing with what I considered to be an unnatural need of an All-American boy, and the revulsion of my mother, who caught me flat-footed (but not flat-chested), did not help—nor did my father's disgust, when he was told. This was the man who had once jumped on me with both feet (figuratively) for talking like Snaglepuss the Lion. Heavens to Murgatroyd! I didn't understand what the problem was until later, when I realized that he thought it sounded effeminate. Now, his son revealed as a boy who dressed up like a girl, he threatened to make me walk the long five miles into town in women's clothing, as he followed in the car.

Would that he had, for I would have been "out," like Martin Smith, and might have even found an airman for myself. Instead, the clothes were disposed of (not my choice; I never voluntarily purged), and the girl-with-no-name was dismembered as effectively as if we had cut her up and thrown her chunk-by-bleeding-chunk from a speeding car on a moonless summer night.

My parents took me to a psychiatrist at the same air base which harbored Martin Smith's sergeant. In my shame and denial, I led him (the psychiatrist, not the sergeant) to think that the crossdressing was

not very important, had just been an experiment. And he went for it, telling my parents that I was "just going through a phase." It's a phase that's still going on, now, at age 42.

I had not been very successful in my quest for information about gender dysphoria—it was not, after all, something I felt comfortable approaching authority figures about, and the few books on the subject in the public library were often checked out or stolen by people much like me—but I had found out that the Johns Hopkins University had a gender clinic, and that they evaluated two people a month. Two people a month in a country with a population of hundreds of millions! What chance would a girl-with-no-name have? She was, after all, a lie, a wraith, a sometimes creature. Surely Hopkins would take those boys who were lucky enough to naturally look like girls without having to work at it, those with ambiguous genitalia, those whose parents had more money than mine. And how would my parents take it, my father who thought that Snaglepuss was a faggot, and my mother who thought that Miss Jane on *The Beverly Hillbillies* was played by Christine Jorgensen? "I just thought I would try it," I told the shrink. "It's not that important." Lie, lie, lie.

It was three or four years later. The girl-with-no-name was back, spending most of her time hanging in a wardrobe in the Ross Fireproof Hotel in downtown Nashville. I had graduated from high school and been summarily ejected from my parents' house due to a combination of bad attitude and parental defiance—all appropriately masculine. I had found a job as a busboy at Shoney's restaurant #2 (the second Shoney's ever to be built), and I would ride the bus to work and back. In the evenings and on my day off, the girl-with-no-name would come out of the closet and wander around downtown, shopping at Belk's and Cain-Sloan and Harvey's, the big three department stores, going to the movies, visiting the library, eating in restaurants. Men in cars would whistle and slow down and try to convince me to get in with them, and I would ignore them, always. But then one day something happened. I—or rather, the girl-with-no-name, found herself in a lip-lock with a cab driver. I had never been kissed before, had never even touched my privates except to wash them, and here I was in an embrace that was growing more passionate by the minute. I was struggling to keep his hands out from under my skirt (a mini—it was the '60s, after all), struggling with my self identity—

continued next page

Laine Alexander

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Growing Up Transgendered...

here I was being kissed by a man, and I damn well knew that underneath the *Charlie* I was a boy, after all, and I knew that I couldn't be gay, for I had no interest in men as a man.

Here I was, with a gender identity which had suddenly slammed itself firmly against the "F" peg and would never again wander into the "M" zone. Here I was with an awakening awareness of my genitals—genitals I was wholeheartedly wishing were "innies" instead of "outies" so that I could go bed with this man like any other woman.

I managed to halt the proceedings just shy of blast-off, and a little short of discovery. The man pleaded with me to be his girlfriend, and asked me to go with him to meet his friends—but I, no Martin Smith, refused him, and did not see him again.

During those days at the Ross Fireproof Hotel, the girl-with-no-name would plot and scheme, trying to figure out how to find a job (short of prostitution) which would allow her to stay out of the closet forever. But she was fighting Mother Nature, and she knew it. She, who had years earlier found a single hair on her face and shuddered, knowing that it was

the first sign of an adolescence she did not want, had been only too correct. Every day, there was more hair on the face, and less on the head. She could feel a masculine essence in her body. She hated it and the gonads which produced it—but she, who had never heard of hormones, could think of nothing to do about it, short of self-castration, of which she was not capable.

I did think of one possibility, but I could never quite bring myself to take it. Nashville had a gay bar of legendary fame, Juanita's, but in my mind's eye it was a wrinkle room, and when, years later, I finally got around to visiting it, I discovered that it indeed was a wrinkle room. I didn't go, and there was nowhere else to go. And then an opportunity arose. A new bar opened. It was called the Watch-Your-Hat-and-Coat Saloon, and it had a drag show. I went once, in DRAB (Dressed As Boy), where I saw for the first time men dancing together, men holding hands. It assuaged my homophobia a bit; it wasn't so awful. It was also the first time I had seen anyone in DRAG (Dressed As Girl). The female impersonators there were stunning, full, I now know, of silicone and hormones.

continued on page 33

MirrorMirror

Melissa Talia, NY



Tina Rapport, NY



Keli, MD (look for her in a future Profile)



MIRROR — ЯОЯЯМ

Melissa Talia, NY



Barbara Ann Roberts, IL



No, they're not twins!
It's Laurie from Arizona in both photos above.

June, NY



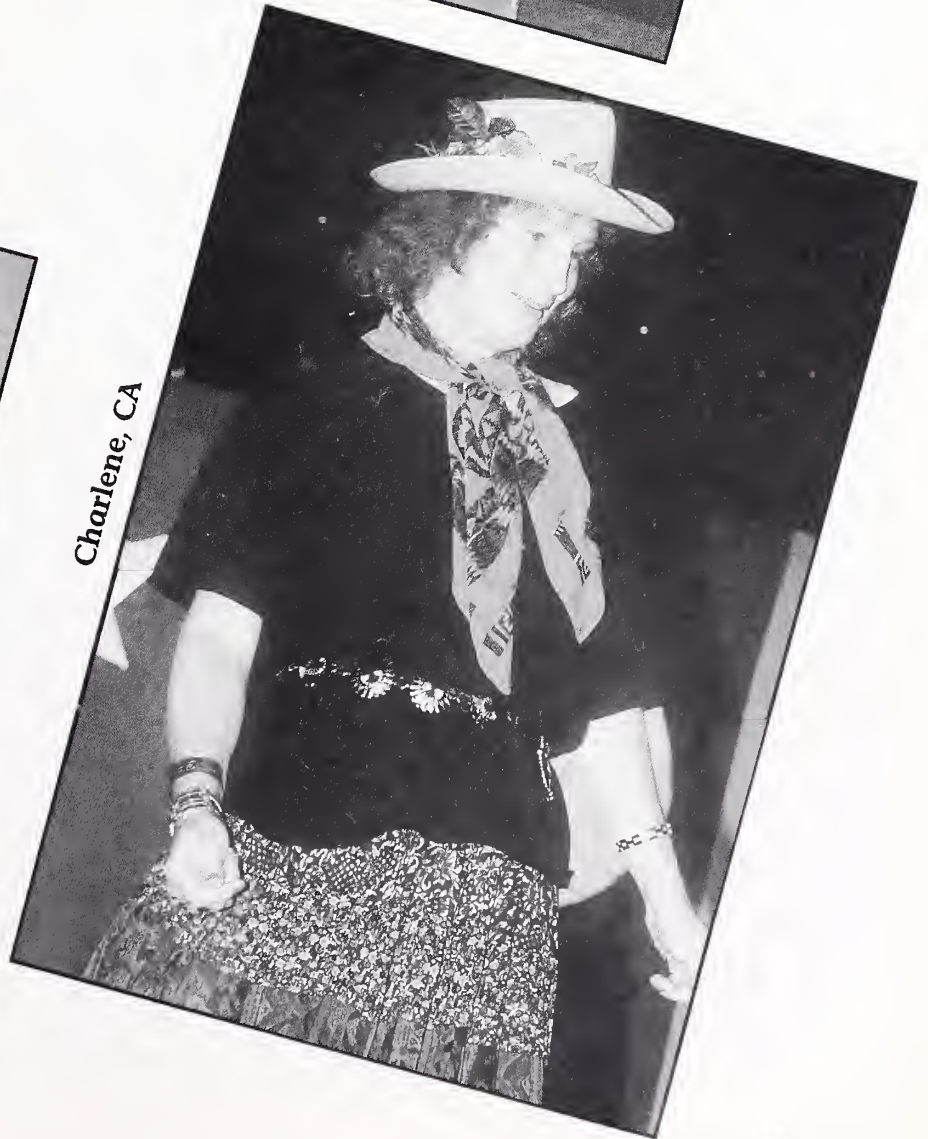
Mlle Monet, MD



Dianne, MN



Charlene, CA



Vanessa, IN



MIRROR — ЯОЯЯM

Fran Estes, NY



Linda Lewis, MI



Theresa, MD



Arlene T. NJ



Joanne, FL



Phyllis L., IL



MIRROR - ЯОЯЯМ

Joanne Wilson, Australia



Lois Comondenominator
Publisher/Editor of Dragazine



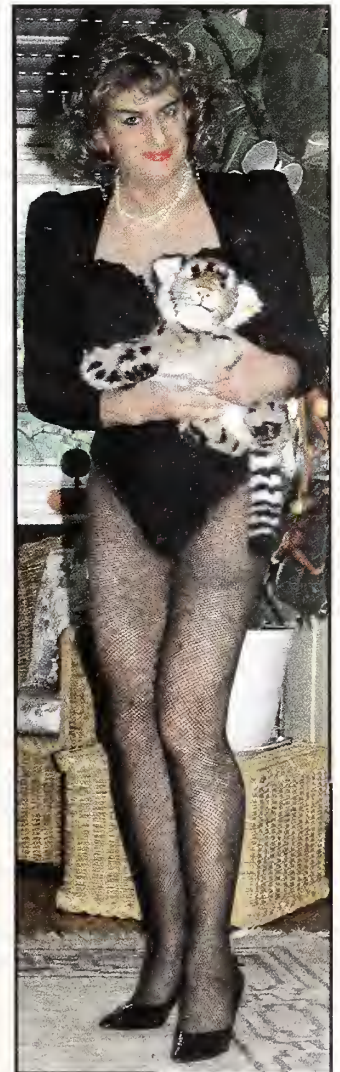
Jamie. West Texas



Susan S., Long Isl., NY



Yvonne T., Berlin, Germany



LadyLike #20 Resources

Our listings are the most up-to-date. Please keep us informed of any changes or additions. Thanks

• National Organizations •

American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724. Publishes *Chrysalis Quarterly*, and several pamphlets on gender issues. Extensive referral network for transsexual issues. 404-939-0244. Call in evening. (Affiliated with Renaissance Educ. Assoc., Inc.)

International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778. Publishes *TV/TS Tapestry*. Reprints and books on TV/TS subjects, other info. 617-899-2212.

Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc., Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406, 610-630-1437, \$16 annual fee includes monthly newsletter. Background Papers on TV/TS issues for personal and professional use. Speakers Bureau. Several chapters. Affiliates noted as "RA."

Society for the Second Self (SSS), Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Focused on families and relationships. Publishes *Femme Mirror*. Chapters marked with "‡"

• Organizations and Businesses •

• by State •

City, Name, Address, Zipcode

Alabama

Huntsville, Sigma Rho Gamma‡, Box 16174, 35802

Arizona

Tempe, Alpha-Zeta‡, Box 24459, 85285
Tempe, A Rose, Box 24623, 85285

Arkansas

Jonesboro, Mu Sigma‡, Box 61, 72403

California

Concord, DVG, Box 272885, 94527
Duarte, CHIC, Box 562, 91010
Glendale, NS Products (Breast Forms), Box 6678-L, 91225
Los Angeles, Androgyny, PO Box 480740, 90048
Los Angeles, Alpha‡, Box 36091, 90036
Sacramento, SGA, Box 215456, 95821

San Diego, Neutral Corner, Box 12581, 92112

San Francisco, ETVC, Box 426486, 94142-64861

San Jose, RGA, Box 700730, 9517
Sherman Oaks, Lydia's Fashions (boutique), 13837 Ventura Blvd., #2, 91423
Tustin, Versatile Fashions (boutique), Box 1051, 92681

Woodland Hills, Cross-Talk, (magazine), PO Box 944, 91365

Yorba Linda, Melody Products Int'l (breast forms), Box 2142, 92686

Yorba Linda, Powder Puffs of Calif., Box 1088, 92686

Connecticut

Farmington, COS, Box 163, 06034
Hartford, The XX Club, Inc. (TS only, please), PO Box 387, 06141-0387

Colorado

Denver, Gender Identity Center Inc., 3715 West 32nd Ave, 80211
Northern & Southern Colo., please call 303-458-5378

Delaware

Wilmington, Renaissance DE Chapter, Box 5656, 19808

Florida

Hollywood, Serenity, Box 307, 33022
Miami, Animas, Box 420309, 33242
Winter Park, Phi Epsilon Mu‡, Box 3261, 32790

Georgia

Rosewell, Sigma Epsilon‡, Box 272, 30077-0272

Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii TG Outreach, 1142 Auhai St., Ste 3114, 96814

Illinois

Chicago, CGS, Box 578005, 60657
Washington, CIGA, Box 126, 61517
Wood Dale, Chi Chapter‡, Box 40, 60191

Indiana

Indianapolis, IXE, Box 20710, 46220

Iowa

Cedar Rapids, Iowa Artistry, Box 75, 52406-0075

Kansas

Kechi, Wichita Transgender Alliance. Box 315, 67067

Overland Park, KCCAF, Box 4092, 66204

Shawnee Mission, Gender Dysphoria Support, Box 15561, 66215

Louisiana

New Orleans, Gulf Area Gender Alliance(RA), Box 870213, 70187

Maine

Portland, TransSupport, Box 17622, 04101

Massachusetts

Waltham, Vernon's Specialties (boutique), 386 Moody St., 02254

Woburn, TCNE Inc., Box 2283, 01888

Michigan

Grand Rapids, IME W. Michigan, Box 1153, 49501

Royal Oak, Crossroads, Box 1245, 48068

Minnesota

Minneapolis, CLCC, Box 16265, 55416
St. Paul, MFGE, Box 17945, 55117

Mississippi

Jackson, Beta Chi‡, Box 31253, 39206

Missouri

St. Louis, St. Louis Gender Found'n, Box 9433, 63117

Nebraska

Council Bluffs, RCGA, Box 680, 51502

New Mexico

Albuquerque, Fiesta!‡, 8200 Montgomery NE #241, 87109

New Jersey

Mays Landing, Renaissance SJ, Box 189, 08330

Red Bank, MOTG(RA), Box 8243, 07701

Trenton, Sigma Nu Rho‡, Box 9255, 08650

New York

Albany, TGIC, Box 13604, 12212
Brooklyn, GNO, Box 369, 11235
Hempstead, LIFE, Box 31, 11551
Mountainville, Chi Delta Mu‡, Box 93, 10953

New York, MGN(RA), Box 45, 561 Hudson St., 10014

New York, Mardi Gras Boutique, 400 W. 14th St. at 8th Ave., 212-947-7773

New York, Mary Lynne White (Image Consultant), 212-978-8520

LadyLike #20

Resources

*Rochester, CD•Network, Box 92055, 14692
Syracuse, EON Inc., 523 W. Onondaga
St., 13204*

*Tillson, Transgender Network, Box 177,
12486-0177*

North Carolina

*Charlotte, CTA, Box 25100, Ste 188,
28229-5100*

*Charlotte, Kappa Beta†, PO Box 12101,
28220-2101*

Ohio

*Cincinnati, Cross-Port, Box 12701,
45212*

Elyria, Alpha-Omega†, Box 954, 44036

Parma, Paradise Club, Box 29564, 44129

*Reynoldsburg, Crystal Club, Box 287,
43068*

Oregon

Portland, NWGA, Box 4928, 97208.

Pennsylvania

Easton, CDI, PO Box 61, 18044

*Elkins Park, Best Value Products (mail
order catalog "B"), Box 8848, 19117*

*Erie, Erie Sisters, 2115 W 8th St, Ste
261, 16505*

*York, Renaissance LSV, Box 2122,
17105*

*Jenkintown, Laine Alexander Image
Consultant, 215-635-8858*

*Phila. (Metro), Renaissance GP, Box
530, Bensalem, 19020*

*Phila., Occasional Woman (custom
clothes), 215-352-0248*

Pittsburgh, TransPitt, Box 3214, 15230

*Upper Darby, Marilyn's Wigs,
215-446-0799*

Tennessee

Nashville, Tenn. Vals, Box 92335, 37209

Texas

Alief, Tau Chi, Box 1105, 77411

*Arlington, Delta Omega†, Box 1021,
76004*

Amarillo, Alpha Chi†, Box 50266, 79159

Bulverde, Heart of Texas, Box 17, 78163

Houston, GCTC, Box 90335, 77090

*Houston, Int'l Conf. on Transgender
Law, 5707 Firenza St., 77035*

*Riesel, TriPlex Gender Assoc., Box 381,
76682*

*San Angelo, Heart of Texas NW, Box
30413, 76903*

*San Antonio, Boulton & Park Society,
Box 700042, 78270-0042*

Utah

*Salt Lake City, Alpha Rho Provesta†,
Box 26711, 84126*

Virginia

Arlington, TGEA, Box 16036, 22215

*Richmond, Virginia's Secret, Box 7386,
23221-0386*

West Virginia

*Huntington, Trans-WV, Box 2322, WV
25724*

Washington

Seattle, Emerald City, Box 31318, 98103

*Stanwood, Omega Alpha†, Box 876,
98292*

•Canadian•

*Cornbury Society, Box 3745,
Vancouver, B.C. V6B-3Z1*

*Gender Mosaic, Box 7421, Ottawa, On-
tario, K1L-8E4*

*Monarch Social Club, Mississauga A
Box 386, Mississauga, Ont. L5A 3A1,
416-949-6602*

*Wildside TV Boutique & Hotel, 161
Gerrard St. E., Toronto, Ontario, M5A-
2E4, 416-864-0420*

*A.A.S. Lingerie, 132 Brunetville Rd.,
Kapuskasing, Ont. P5N-2G7.*

*FantasyLand, 274 8th St. E., Box 682,
Owen Sound, Ontario, N4K-5R4*

• Overseas •

**Note: Because of the growing num-
bers of support groups overseas, we
can no longer list all of them here.
Please refer to our Who's Who &
Resource Guide to the International
Transgender Community for all fu-
ture international listings. We real-
ize this may be an inconvenience to
our international readers and we
apologize.**

•Recurring Events•

*California Dreamin', put on by PPOC,
CHIC, et. al. in May in Burbank, Ca.*

*Be All You Can Be Weekend, put on by
Paradise Club, Crossroads, Trans-Pitt
and Chi Chapter in June. Rotates thru
Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pitts-
burgh. '94 in Pittsburgh.*

*Esprit, put on by Emerald City, NWGA
& Cornbury Society in May in Port
Angeles, Wash.*

*Fantasia Fair, sponsored by the Out-
reach Institute in Provincetown, Mass.,
in October.*

*IFGE Convention, once a year in March/
April, '95 in Atlanta, GA. Contact
I.F.G.E.*

*Monarch Mardi Gras, Monarch Social
Club, 1st wknd in October in Ontario.*

*Paradise in the Poconos, 4days/3 nights,
May & Sept. in the Pa. Poconos. Con-
tact CDS/JoAnn Roberts.*

*Southern Comfort, Sept. weekend in
Atlanta. Contact CTA, North Carolina.*

*Texas "T" Party, February Weekend in
San Antonio. Contact Boulton & Park.*

*Tiffany Provincetown Outings, twice
a year in Oct & June. Contact TCNE,
Mass.*

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business, or advertiser, enclose a
#10 stamped self-addressed busi-
ness envelope for their reply. It
will be greatly appreciated and
speed their response. Also, tell them
you saw their ad or listing in
LadyLike. We'll appreciate that.**

Chriss

Crossen



LadyLike's Profile

NAME: Chriss Crossen

AGE: 39

PROFESSION: Skilled Craftsperson

RESIDENCE: Middle America

HEIGHT: 6' 4"

WEIGHT: 173#

MEASUREMENTS: 43-30-36

SHOE SIZE: 12/13

FAVORITE THINGS

SHOE STYLE: Patent pumps & tall boots

ACTIVITY: Touring on a Harley

MOVIE: Being There, Easy Rider

MUSIC: Beethoven, BB King, U2

PLACE: The woods in Autumn

TURN-ONS: Athletic ladies dressed to kill

TURN-OFFS: Ego-masturbators, pride backed by ignorance.



Chriss Crossen

LadyLike: You have an “unusual” hobby—and I don’t mean the crossdressing. You collect *Fredericks of Hollywood* catalogs. Tell us how that started and what the catalogs represent to you.

Chriss Crossen: Like many young “men,” catalogs were my first view of women (sans Mom) in anything other than full attire. Yes, there was Sear & Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, and J.C.Penney, circa 1962, but in a bundle of newsprint at my aunt’s home, I found IT — a *Fredericks of Hollywood* catalog.

Later, I had acquired a small collection of coveted *Playboy* magazines. Beyond “gatefold” Cynthia Meyers, I was most fascinated by the scantily clad — always perfect—illustrations of Vargas. *Fredericks of Hollywood* catalogs mirrored that style. They’ve since switched to flesh-and-blood models, yet there is still that degree of perfection in the female aesthetic that continues.

Freddie’s clothes have always been sexy and now

may be included in everyday wear, even business.

It could be said that clothes are only as beautiful as the person that fills them. I think that “Mr. Hollywood” has both beautiful, sexy clothing, and the most beautifully figured and featured women I have ever seen anywhere. The term proper for such a combination is — GORGEOUS.

LL: Your height is impressive and with heels you must tower over everyone else. It must be very difficult finding sexy fashions for extremely tall gals. You say you have a few tricks up your “extended” sleeve; why not share one or two with our tall sisters.

CC: It’s kind of scary when I add 4-inch heels and perhaps 3” of hair to a 6’ 4” frame; the math adds up to an inch shy of seven feet. I look like RuPaul’s lighter cousin. Tall sisters don’t despair.

We live in an era of over-sized clothing, no fixed



I had an “Oedipus Complex” once-removed for Aunt Dee. She was single, successful, and very sexy. Mom said she dressed like a “teeny-bopper” and wore too much perfume, but I loved it. I recall she seldom arrived at a family function alone, and her standards seemed obvious by the caliber of the gentlemen at her side. Hefner, move over.

So, on my appointed rounds, key in hand and cats well-fed, I noticed that the front hall closet was open. As I was closing the door, I noticed a reflection of light. It was her long, black patent rain slicker. I reached to touch it. It was so glossy and smooth and reflected so much light, even though it was jet black.

I recalled rainy days when she wore it. She looked so great, and it made squeaky sounds when she moved. With deliberation that seemed like days, but likely lasted seconds, I pulled it from the hanger and slowly slipped it on. There were incredible sensations in the way it felt and fit. The smell of her perfume lingering on the coat made my head spin.

I put it back a little confused. The next day I was back and bolder. I checked all the closets. I found miniskirts (too big), and high heels (too tight) and a wig she seldom wore.

length for hems, larger sizes, and Lycra!

For example: an over-sized leather coat in a size 10 becomes a hot leather mini-dress for me. Large items for even petite women can become tight fitting mini items for us. If a full-length “stretchable” sweater dress comes above your knees, nowadays, what’s the difference?

Arm length and fit across the bust is important. How a garment hangs on you counts, but length of the hem (if you have the legs) is seldom a bother. There are larger sizes out there and a tall gal *can* do alterations.

In my search for clothes, I realized that Fredericks had pants that when unhemmed fit well. Again, spandex stirrup pants, tall boots over shorter pants, etc., can work. Like Madonna, if it fits close, feels good, looks good — wear it!

LL: I have to ask this next question if only to validate what we already know. Tell us about your early recollections of crossdressing.

CC: At the dawn of my sexual awareness (early teens) I was given the task of taking care of my Aunt Dee’s cats while she was in Europe on vacation.



By day four, I was looking in her full-length mirror at a poor-quality imitation of her, topped off with the coat that made me shine. Thank you Calvin Kline!

Years later she had a garage sale and asked me to help. When alone, I put my money in the cash box and bought what I wanted most — her sexiest attire. The coat was gone by then, but in with the shoes was a pair of black kidskin boots with 4" heels. I had never seen her wear them and was intrigued that they were thigh-high, even taller than the skirts she wore. Although they were too small, I kept them anyway. They were so exotic and of very high quality leather (Italian, of course).

LL: You hit a "high" with a particular Hallowe'en party and then a "crash" afterwards. Tell us about that experience.

CC: Life has priorities, and after the rights of "manhood" in my teens, with my affection, or perhaps worship, of women more than evident, I had taken several partners, and now perhaps the last.

My fiancé and I were invited to a "gender-bender" come as the opposite sex costume party. It



was to be my introduction to total crossdressing. We (i.e., she) decided it would be great if I went as the hooker and she as the pimp. That struck a match to an old, and unknown to her, fuse.

She and her friends found me an outfit, shoes and wig. The, on the party night, she gave me one hell of a makeover. The final touch was a belt change maker. I was totally unrecognizable to even my closest friends at the party.

After much drinking, it was decided "we're all going uptown." I agreed to go if we went by cab. As we arrived at the rowdiest joint possible, I leaned into the cab to pay the fare and jokingly whispered a soprano, "Thank you, daahhhling" to the cabbie. When he replied, "Why, than you miss" I freaked.

Turning down requests to dance and getting pinched at the bar was a bit of a gender "grief" lesson. Having so many friends along assured that a great time was had by all.

But, now I was "hooked" (pun intended) and I took my first "other-self" portraits. When my fiancé found the pictures of me in drag, she accused me of being unfaithful. I explained that the "girl" in the photos was me. I may have been better off had I



been having an affair with someone else. I purged but kept Aunt Dee's boots.

We still broke up after that. Now, several years later, she is discreet, and my friend, but perplexed.

LL: After the break up, did you ever try to tell anyone about Chriss again?

CC: A decade or so of living alone, then with roommates, then without has allowed me to collect another hidden wardrobe and selectively dress at home. None of the ladies in my life, or my friends, have ever seen Chriss and her anxiety is often tempered by the internalized wish that they knew her, or of her. Well, I take that back. I did tell one lady from Pennsylvania about Chriss. I've been able to confide in her the most, or more than I've ever done before.

LL: Where does Chriss go from here?

CC: I'd love to go to a *Dressing for Pleasure* or a *Paradise In The Poconos*. The thing I'd like to do most besides going "into" my closet, is just the opposite. I'm a heterosexual transvestite and I'd like to be proud of it. How about the first straight Female Impersonator Of The Year? Fairytales can come true.



Growing Up Transgendered...

I almost went back to the Hat-and-Coat as the girl-with-no-name, but the bar's policy was no drag, and although I was very convincing, I had no documentation to make my girlhood official, and so never went, for the same reason that I could never bring myself to go to the psychedelic night club which was fifty yards from my room at the Ross. And then the Hat-and-Coat burned, and some people died, jumping from upper stories to avoid the flames, as a fireman friend of mine once told me. It hasn't occurred to me until now, but perhaps it was providence which kept me out of the Hat-and-Coat. Still, I've always wondered how my life would have turned out if I had sought shelter within the gay community, as many transgendered people do.

And so, the testosterone marched on, and I entered adulthood as a man instead of as a woman, and the straight world instead of the gay. Married a woman, grew a beard, went to college. Got weak in the knees every time I saw a pretty girl, I wanted to be her so much. Got divorced (of unrelated causes).

It was 1978, and, single again, I had moved back to Nashville after completing my Master's program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. A beard of seven years was gone, and the girl-with-no-name was back, even if she was not passing so well because of testosterone "poisoning." I was going to the gay bars, blowing men in parking lots, facing a lifetime of looking increasingly more bizarre in a dress, becoming increasingly dysphoric about my body, finding it more and more difficult to think of myself as the girl-with-no-name, for I was starting to see in the mirror not the girl, and not the woman she should have become, but a man-in-a-dress. I decided that it was time to come to terms with myself, to stop hiding the girl-with-no-name in the closet, to integrate her into my life.

I started by acknowledging that I was at the very least a crossdresser. I quit worrying that my pumps or wig would be seen, or that I would be seen wearing them. One by one, I told my friends and acquaintances. Step One.

Those were the days of Jan Morris and Renee Richards; gender reassignment, while still scandalous, was at least thinkable. Step Two was to ask myself whether I wanted to be a woman. I already knew the answer to that one.

Step Three was to ask myself if it would be possible to change myself, via surgery, electrolysis, and better living through chemistry, to pass convinc-

ingly as a woman. I refused to be a man-in-a-dress. I took careful stock of my body. I didn't at all like what I saw. My body had moved in undesirable directions since that day when I found that single hair growing on my face. I was too hairy. Too big. Too this, not enough that. I made a list, and then scratched off things that could be changed via hard work, hormones, electrolysis, surgery. I looked at what was left and thought "Just maybe..."

And so I took myself to the gender clinic at Vanderbilt University, where I gave them some money and told them about the girl-with-no-name. After a time, they got back to me, saying that they had made a decision about my gender. *They* had made the decision! And no, it wasn't the one I wanted. They would offer me counseling to help me in my life as a man. Thank you very much, but Fuck You! I didn't go back.

The story of my change from a man to a woman is lengthy, and full of pain and expense and loss and joy and strength and self-awareness, a story for another article, as this one has already grown quite lengthy. Suffice it to say that I did an end-around the clinic and found some hormones (it was the clinic which made me realize I should be taking them when they told me that they would not give them to me!). I started electrolysis, and eventually—very eventually—it took me ten more years—began successfully living as a woman.

It wasn't until 1989, when I was finally ready to make that big leap across genders, that I first got the chance to talk to a transsexual person—not that I was transsexual. Oh, no. I was just a man who had always wanted to be a woman, yup, yup, no t-words applied to me, thank you veddy much. It was wonderful to actually meet someone else with the same condition (curse? blessing?). I had realized early-on that I was not the only one in the world (there *were* books in the libraries, after all, even if they were always checked out, so there had to be more who were like me). But where they were—*that* was the mystery. I supposed that many, like me, must be completely alone with feelings which have to be some of mankind's most difficult to cope with—but I also knew that there had to be a community, gatherings of people like me who would get together and talk trans, provide support, swap stories of girls-within and marriages to air men and trysts with cab drivers. I had just never been able to find that community. The libraries certainly hadn't pointed me in the

continued next page

right direction. Adult bookstores were no better. I would buy shrink-wrapped magazines with disgusting names, hoping to find some useful information inside. Instead there would be chicks-with-dicks instead of magic keys to the gender community. Circulation time for a magazine, purchase to garbage can—five minutes. Did you hear that, *Guinness Book of Records*?

I finally found the community by joining a cross-dressing club; it was the only thing I knew to do. I was a crossdresser who passed, a crossdresser who had had electrolysis, a crossdresser with size C breasts, a crossdresser people were calling ma'am even when I was at my masculine best with my girlfriend. I was no crossdresser at all. I phased through that club like a knife through butter, and emerged on the other side, in Wonderland. There were transsexual people everywhere. For the first time, I was not alone.

The girl-with-no-name now has a name, although she would rather not tell the world what it is in this article. It is, in fact, the name she had all along, one of those names which turns out to work perfectly well as a woman's name, thank you. She is finally a creature of flesh-and-blood rather than a fantasy. She is not a notion of a woman, not an imitation of a woman, not a man's idea of what a woman should be, but a woman, with all the virtues and warts, the rights and privileges pertaining thereto—a woman who can be raped, who can be strong, who can bake a cake and change the spark plugs in her car. It is she who I see in the mirror every morning instead of the burr-headed boy I once was. Finally, at long last, thank God, it's over.

Author's Note:

I have embraced the community I found on the other side of the mirror, and I have spent a considerable amount of my time, energy, and money leading other lost souls to the looking glass, so that they can pass through if they so desire. Perhaps, as I am post-op now, I should do the usual transsexual trick, blending into the woodwork. Maybe I will one day, but I can't yet. There are too many people out there who are as lonely, frustrated, anguished, and angry as I once was. For the first time, the girl-who-now-has-a-name has a purpose beyond mere existence.

To those of you who are transgendered and have not found the your way through the looking glass: know that you can, if it is your earnest and heart's desire. You can reach out by writing or calling AEGIS, which is an information clearinghouse for transgendered persons; their address and phone number appear below.

To those of you who are gay: I think I can understand how lonely you must have been before you found the gay community. I hope you can understand that it is just as bad, and maybe even worse, for me and other transgendered persons.

The American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc. (AEGIS), offers information and referrals to crossdressers and transsexual persons. AEGIS' excellent magazine, *Chrysalis Quarterly*, can be found at bookstores or by direct subscription.

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OTTO
OTTO

Personals



2007 — Mass: Coquettish, 5'5", 132 lbs., bi-TV loves dating, dancing, modeling, feminine roles, and naughty video making/exchange. Value safety, discretion, sincerity, and those who send photo



2008—Ont., Canada — Laurie (Bride) & Bambi (Bridesmaid) wish to correspond with other TVs and their wives, meetings possible. Would also like to hear from other TVs. Must send photos w/reply. All answered.



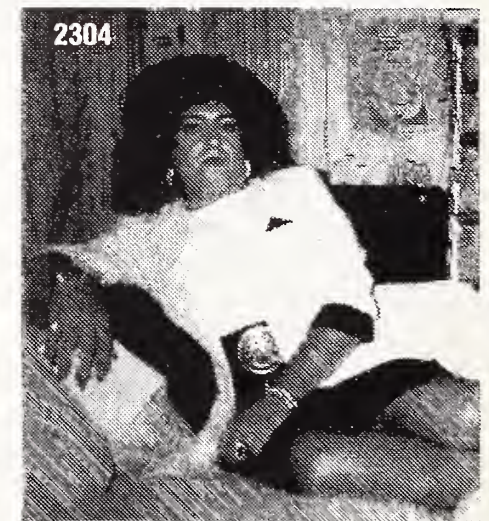
2110—Mich., Marcia Ann: For over 25 years have enjoyed traveling, dining, & shopping "en femme." Authored article on mature CD's for *LadyLike*. Love to correspond with prompt reply to all & like to help others.



2111 — Penna: Heterosexual male seeks female who understands that I can be her man as well as her sister. I would also like to correspond with other TVs in Upper Bucks Co., Pa. who feel the same. Will answer all letters.



2212—Wis: Hi! I'm Cindy (more pix in LL#8) seeking friendships and girl-talk correspondence with sisters and real women who love this feminine lifestyle. Serious about femininity and the "total" look. Let's share.



2304 — NJ: Crossdresser from Central New Jersey seeking same for correspondence and possible meeting. Love dressing and role playing. Discretion a must! Photo with reply. Tiffany.

Personals



2305—New York: If you want a good correspondent with wide knowledge of TV affairs, then drop me a line. Always room for a new friend. I answer all letters. Connie.



2313 — New Jersey: I am a very caring & loving live-alone TV who loves the feminine lifestyle. I love to entertain & welcome those who enjoy all feminine things. Respond with picture, I will also answer all. I promise. Central NJ & Eastern Pa. Arlene T.



2314 — Mass: Attractive, sexy TV submissive seeks correspondence with mature, caring women for poss. long term relationship. Would love to have a feminine woman force me into her world of silk and lace. Love to hear from you. Send photo & detailed letter.

2009 — Missouri: BiWMTV, 5'10", 140#. Sexy, almost passable. Seeking intimate times with special man or other TV. Sincere, clean and very discreet. Christina.

2302 — New York: Pretty TV, feminine and passable in public. 38, 5'9", thin. Seek men, women, couples for friendship, dating, parties and safe bedroom fun exploring our fantasies. Long Island & NYC preferred. Janet.

2315 — Tenn: Middle Tenn. gentleman. early 50's would love to correspond and hopefully meet TVs for dinner. dancing, hand holding, or whatever. Discretion a must. All will get a reply. Your picture appreciated.

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- Sign your letter...
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American Educational Gender Information Service

AEGIS is a non-profit information and education resource for all transgendered people, their families and professionals who work with them. AEGIS publishes *Chrysalis Quarterly* and numerous information pamphlets. AEGIS supports SSSS, HBGDA, SIECUS and other professional organizations.

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Chapter 2

All dressed in white, starched, clean, I feel like a nurse. White shoes, white stockings, white dress. White panties, white bra. White. I want to minister to the sick, to wipe sweat away from fevered brows. What I do is slop the hogs. By the end of the shift, the white will be marred by gravy and ketchup and thousand island dressing stains. I'll go home smelling like a hamburger. I'll make everyone hungry. "Damn it, Leroy," Mom will yell. "Git out of that waitress dress and into a pair of britches and take that makeup off. It makes you look like a tramp. And get busy in the kitchen. Your Pa will be home any time now and he'll want his supper waitin'."

But that's 10 hours away. Today, Saturday, is my favorite day at the truck stop, because I start with the sunrise, pushing coffee on bleary-eyed semi drivers and the breakfast bar on blue-haired ladies on the way to Florida with their bald-headed husbands. The new hot bar takes most of the work out of breakfast. It's a wonder, the way folks put it away when they pay four ninety-nine for all they can eat. They got to get their money's worth. They go right for the high-cost foods, too, piling thin strips of bacon high on their plates, lining link sausages up like sardines, stacking slices of ham, peppering their eggs, ladling gravy over sausage patties, smothering their pancakes with syrup and butter,

coming
back
time and
time again to
fill their tiny
glasses with
orange juice. They
load themselves up
with cholesterol and
starch and fat and sugar
and caffeine until I wonder
how they make it to the cash
register without having a stroke.
Until I tear the breakfast bar down
after lunch, there's not much to do but

keep the line stocked and
clean up after the messiest
eaters. I'm not allowed
to ring up customers,
on account of I've
not been here
six months
yet. It's the
third

truck
stop I've
worked at.

The third
truck stop I've
had to work at. I
keep ranging further
afield, as the rumors of
Leroy, Jr. keep pursuing
me (with Johnny playing the
part of the winged messenger).
After what happened on Tuesday
evening, it seems unlikely I'll ever
be ringing up customers here. And
this time, it wasn't even Johnny Ray's
fault. I was in the walk-in cooler, stretch-
ing up for a tray of sliced cucumbers for the
salad bar when I got grabbed from behind. It
was Mr. DiPoulo, the area supervisor, a dirty little
Greek man who thinks too much about what he
calls the Big Nasty. He got more than he bargained for,
for he encountered my Problem. Now, most men don't
really care— not so long as they get theirs, if you know
what I mean— but Mr. DiPee, he just backed away with
this frightened look on his face. I half-expected him to
make the sign of the cross at me, as if I were a vampire or
something. He just stood there white-faced, and I said, "I
won't tell if you won't," and he gulped and nodded his
head and reached behind him and got the door of the walk-
in open and slipped out. He won't tell, either, but I know
how these things work. The manager will start finding fault
with little things that I do, or maybe I'll be blamed for
something that I didn't do, and I'll be looking for a job
again. It's happened before.

Bobbo Joe, the Paiute Indian short-order cook, has a
permanent hard-on for me. Maybe it's just that he has a
permanent hard-on and it's usually pointed in my direc-
tion. He's furiously jealous of the truckers who call me Hon
and leave big tips and pinch my fanny every now and

continued next page

The Problem

again. When he thinks a driver is getting fresh, he puts Visine in his food, which causes the driver great distress about a hundred miles down the road. Bobbo would lose his job if Mr. DiPoulo or Murray, the manager found out about it. But I don't tell and Bobbo doesn't tell, and the truckers don't associate being sick with their food—or at least don't think they've been Visined, for if they did they would drive their rigs back to the truck stop and kick the shit out of Bobbo Joe, who, although he stands six feet and nine inches tall, is little more than a boy and would probably just stand there and let them kick his ass.

I make lots of tips working here on Saturday and Sunday and three nights a week. I've filled all the drawers under my waterbed with quarters and half-dollars and dollar bills, and I have more than four thousand dollars in a CD account. It's my surgery money, my kitty account. I probably have enough to do something about my Problem, except that I've put plans on hold in that department on account of Mary June Cunningham.

You'll notice I've been capitalizing the word Problem. Sometimes writers do that, too. I like it better than the quote marks, so whether I'm speaking of it as a problem or as a "problem," from now on I'll call it a Problem.

Anyway, I could go overseas for surgery (it's cheaper there), and then I would be a whole woman, but if I did then M.J. would leave me and I would be heartbroken. I love Mary June and she loves my Problem. She wants it to get big and hard so I can push it into her body like a man pushes into a woman. That isn't likely to happen, because of the hormones I take, but sometimes it does stir around a bit, and it gets her all excited. I don't like her touching it—after all, it's not supposed to even be there, but I love M.J. and want to make her happy, and so I let her do what she wants to with it, even though I hate it and wish it were gone.

I can't believe I'm writing this down.

All the rest of the time except when Mary June is trying to get me to use it on her, I wish the Problem was gone. I wish it would screw off so I could keep it in my pocketbook along with my keys and compact and mascara and wallet. I wish that when Mary June wanted it, I could just dig it out of my purse, go to the bathroom and attach it.

Well, there's one other time when I would wear it, and that's when I am in the woods and there isn't a toilet handy. I would wear it then. And maybe, just maybe, I would put

it on in secret every now and again, just because the way I look I'm not supposed to have it. And if it would get big and hard, maybe I would whip old Leroy, Jr. out every once in a while and shock the church ladies. Maybe I would show it to Bobbo and tell him it just grew there overnight. Maybe I would let the next truck driver who tries to feel me up put his hand there and get a surprise. Maybe. But mostly, it would just sit in my purse, awaiting a legitimate use, and I would have the other thing, the female thing, all the rest of the time. And I would use it, too.

You wouldn't think truckers would be such big eaters of greens. After lunch I tear down the breakfast bar and set up the salad bar. It makes me smile to see a two-hundred pound man making a meal of lettuce and radishes and bean sprouts.

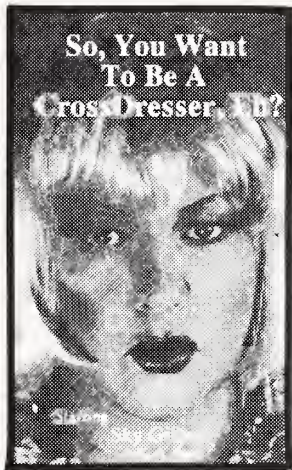
You wouldn't think truckers would be romantic, either, but they are, some of them. Archie Salesmin, who hauls screen doors from Gary, Indiana to Hollywood, Florida, brings me a red rose every time he comes through on the way south, and a white or yellow one when he comes through on the way north. He wants me to go out with him, but I'm afraid to on account of incompatible anatomies. The Problem, raising its ugly head again. Its Cyclopean eye. God only knows what he would do when he found out. So I just smile and take the roses and give Gary, Indiana a hug, being careful to keep my chest a handsbreadth from his so he won't get any ideas, and thank him, and three days later, he's back with another rose. I don't know, maybe the hug keeps him going. The roses sure help me to keep going.

A florid-faced, bald-headed married man from Oregon is flirting with me, telling me I'm pretty, hinting that he has something to show me up in the sleeper of his truck. Bobbo Joe isn't missing nothing, and thirty minutes from now, that trucker will be looking for a commode. Not knowing this, he shovels down his spaghetti and meatballs and tetrahydrozoline and winks at me. Bobbo stands in the kitchen with his hands out of sight and looks at me through the food window. He holds up a paper plate. A severed finger lies there, gore trickling out, only it's not gore, but cocktail sauce, and the finger, which is sticking through a hole he has cut in the plate underneath all that cocktail sauce, is still securely attached to Bobbo's hamlike hand.

Bobbo has a bag of tricks like Felix the Cat's. You wouldn't think about an Indian being a practical joker, but he's the world's worst. He's only been got once, and that

continued on page 42

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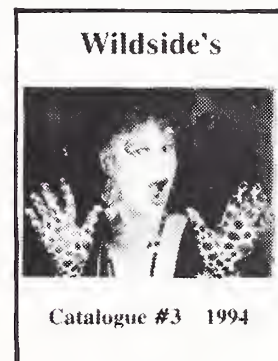
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The Problem

was by Murray Lockett, the manager, on payday, about a month ago. Bobbo had a new trick, and he was trying it on everyone. He would ask someone to get out a dollar bill. They would, and he would tell them to find on it the name of a famous movie and a brand of cigarettes. When they gave up, he would grab the dollar and tear it in two and holler "Half and Half and Gone With the Wind" and toss the pieces away and laugh like a hyena. After a dozen employees and customers had come to Murray to borrow the Scotch tape to hold their dollars together, he had asked someone why they wanted the tape and found out what Bobbo was up to. He'd waited until payday, and then cashed Bobbo's check, like always. Bobbo had clocked out and gone in the bathroom to fix his duck-ass, leaving his jacket on the counter, like he always does. Murray picked up the jacket and got Bobbo's wallet. He took out a twenty dollar bill and made me go to the cash register and get twenty ones. I hurried, so that Bobbo wouldn't be out of the necessary room before I got back— not that there was much danger of that, 'cause friend Bobbo has a fifteen-minute DA. Murray took all those ones and put them in the money clip in his front pocket and took off for the dining room.

Bobbo came out of the bathroom and was putting on his jacket when Murray came bursting into the kitchen and said, "I hear you got a trick, a good one. Show it to me." Bobbo said sure, give him a dollar. Murray did, but when Bobbo got to the part when he says "Half and Half and Gone With the Wind," he stopped and told Murray that he couldn't do it to him. Murray told him to go ahead, if it was a good trick. Bobbo tore the dollar apart and threw it and laughed like a fool.

Murray—and this is the part that killed me, only I couldn't laugh, 'cause Bobbo would have known something was up— Murray just stood there looking puzzled and then shook his head and said, "I didn't quite get that. Show me again," and took another of Bobbo's dollar bills from his money clip. Bobbo pointed at the two halves on the floor and asked Murray wasn't he going to pick them up and Murray waved his hand and said, "Later. I'm concentrating on learning this. Here. Show me again."

Well, Bobbo stood there tearing up dollars until there was a big pile of them on the floor, with Murray saying, "One more time. I think I've almost got it." When Bobbo tore up the last bill, Murray just turned and walked away. Bobbo hollered after him wasn't he going to pick up his money, but Murray just kept walking.

Well, when I told Bobbo whose money he had torn up and thrown all over the kitchen, he went white under his red skin. He was so shook up that if I hadn't of helped him match them up, he would have never got those dollars all taped together. Then, to make matters worse, he tried to pay for some coffee to go with one of them and Murray came up and told him he couldn't take that dollar as there appeared to be something wrong with it and it might be counterfeit.

Bobbo couldn't get back at Murray, on account of him being the boss, but he was mad at me for standing there not saying anything. One night about a week later, he kept disappearing. No one seemed to know where he was going. When I got off at midnight, I found out what he had been doing. He had gone out maybe four or five times an hour and thrown a five-gallon bucket of water on my car—which would have been no big deal, except that it was about five degrees outside. The tires were bulged out from the weight of the ice and I couldn't get the key in the lock. I had to carry buckets of hot water out and pour them over the door until I could get the key in the lock and get in the car and start it. While it warmed up, I sat in a White Freightliner with a man called Max and let him play with my breasts. I told Bobbo about it the next day, but it was too late for the Visine, as Max was about four states gone by that time.

I wonder what Bobbo Joe would do if he found out about Leroy, Jr.?

Could You Use Some Spare \$\$?

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How The LL Chat Line Works

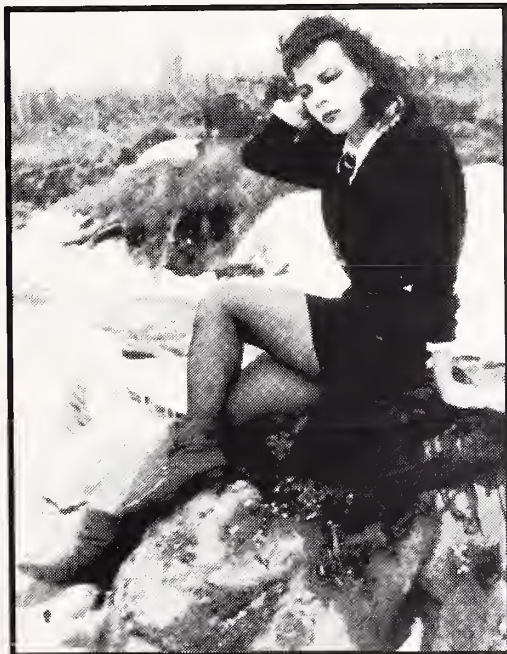
Listening To Messages...

1. Have writing materials ready in case you hear personal information, names, voicemail box numbers, etc. that you wish to note.
2. Call the 900 Connections Line number advertised on the opposite page, including the extension number (**Ext. 210**) and follow the easy-to-understand audio instructions.
3. There are several categories.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1-Straight Men | 5-Swingers |
| 2-Straight Women | 6-TVs/TSs |
| 3-Gay Men | 7-Fetish Men |
| 4-Gay Women | 8-Fetish Women |



Category 6 is designed especially for readers of *LadyLike*, but feel free to try the other lines as well.



Leaving Messages...

1. Write down your message and practice it first. You can include personal contact information or remain anonymous. The choice is yours.
2. Call the 900 number advertised on the opposite page including the extension (**Ext. 210**) and listen to the easy-to-follow audio instructions.
3. When asked to speak, speak clearly into the telephone handset. Keep the message brief and to the point.

Important! All personal messages are automatically screened before being loaded into the Connections Line. If your message is pornographic, profane, violent, bigoted or obviously insincere, it will be rejected. Below are examples of acceptable and unacceptable messages.

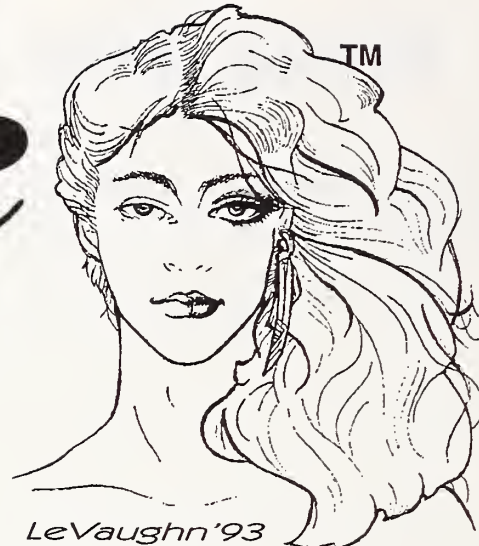
Acceptable Example

Hi, my name is Tricia. I'm a 30 year old crossdresser who loves leather minis and spiked heels. I need someone to talk to and help me learn more about this. Call if you are sincere and want to help.

Unacceptable Example

This is Roxy and I'm looking for a real stud to show me a hot time in the bedroom. My mouth is hot, wet and hungry for a real man. If you want a TV-slut, I'm your whore. Call me...

LadyLike



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LadyLike #20

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